
AP[®] Comparative Government and Politics

Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary Set 1

Inside:

Free-Response Question 4

- ☒ **Scoring Guidelines**
- ☒ **Student Samples**
- ☒ **Scoring Commentary**

Question 4: Argument Essay**5 points**

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
Row A Claim/Thesis (0–1 points)	0 points Does not meet the criteria for one point.	1 point Responds to the prompt with a defensible claim or thesis that establishes a line of reasoning.
	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes	
	Responses that do not earn this point: - Only restate the prompt. - Do not make a claim that responds to the prompt.	Responses that earn this point: - Respond to the prompt rather than restating or rephrasing the prompt and establish a line of reasoning. - Provide a defensible claim or thesis that establishes a line of reasoning as to whether a multiparty system sustains political legitimacy better than a one-party or a dominant party system using one or more of the provided course concepts: stability, representation, and transfer of power.
	Examples that do not earn this point: Restate the prompt <i>“A multi-party system is better at sustaining legitimacy.”</i> <i>“Countries with a one-party system, like China, are the best for sustaining political legitimacy.”</i> <i>“A dominant party system is better at sustaining legitimacy than a multi-party system.”</i> Do not respond to the prompt <i>“Nigeria has a multi-party system with over 30 political parties.”</i> <i>“Countries in this course have a variety of different party systems.”</i>	Examples that earn this point: <i>“A dominant party system is best at maintaining political legitimacy because the dominant party provides stability through policies/leadership that don’t change.”</i> <i>“In a multiparty system, multiple parties receive seats in the legislature and representatives more closely reflect the viewpoints of citizens, giving citizens a strong sense of representation, which makes multiparty systems better at maintaining political legitimacy.”</i> <i>“A one-party system is best at maintaining political legitimacy because power does not transfer between political parties, and this increases stability and predictability in policymaking, increasing citizens’ support for the government.”</i>
	Additional Notes: - The claim or thesis must consist of one or more sentences that may be located anywhere in the response. - A claim or thesis that meets the criteria can be awarded the point whether or not the rest of the response successfully supports that line of reasoning.	

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria		
Row B Evidence (0–2 points)	0 points Does not meet the criteria for one point.	1 point Provides <u>one</u> piece of specific and relevant evidence from a course country relevant to one of the course concepts in the prompt.	2 points Provides <u>two</u> pieces of specific and relevant evidence from one or more course countries relevant to one or more of the course concepts in the prompt.
	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes		
	Responses that do not earn points: - Do not provide any accurate evidence. - Provide evidence that is not relevant to the course concepts in the prompt.	Responses that earn 1 or 2 points: Provide specific and relevant evidence from required course countries, relevant to the course concepts in the prompt.	
	Examples that do not earn points: Provide evidence that is not specific “Nigeria has been stable in recent years.” Provide evidence that is not relevant to course concepts in the prompt “Liz Truss was chosen as prime minister after Boris Johnson by members of the party.”	Examples of acceptable specific and relevant evidence (one example is one piece of evidence): “The United Russia Party has dominated Russia for many years with limitation on dissent and strong government authority, providing the country with political stability.” “In China’s one-party system, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)’s authority and consistency has provided the country with policy stability for decades.” “Mexico, UK and Nigeria have multiparty systems, allowing many parties and coalitions to represent a wide range of political views.” “Nigeria has a multiparty system, with smaller parties earning seats in the legislature and representing various ethnic groups.” “The United Kingdom has a multiparty system and smaller parties, including regional parties, that earn seats in the legislature, representing minority interests.” “Mexico, UK and Nigeria have had multiple peaceful transfers of power between political parties.”	
	Additional Notes - A response does not need to earn the point in Row A to earn points in Row B. - A response does not need to explain the relationship between the evidence and the claim or thesis to earn points in Row B. (That explanation is evaluated in Row C.)		

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
Row C Reasoning	0 points Does not meet the criteria for one point.	1 point Explains how or why the evidence supports the claim or thesis
(0–1 points)	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes	
	Responses that do not earn this point: • Include evidence but offer no reasoning to connect the evidence to the claim or thesis. • Restate the prompt without explaining how the evidence supports the claim or thesis. Examples that do not earn points: • <i>“Peaceful transfers of power in Mexico provide stability.”</i> • <i>“China’s one-party system has limited citizen efficacy, which creates low legitimacy.”</i> • <i>“Russia’s dominant party systems never enjoy public support and thus have low legitimacy.”</i>	Responses that earn this point: • Explain the relationship between the evidence provided and the claim or thesis. Examples of reasoning that explain how evidence supports the claim or thesis: • <i>“Frequent changes in policy direction from different parties in power produce instability, which can undermine regime legitimacy.”</i> • <i>“Countries with a one-party dominant system typically have electoral rules and/or constitutional provisions in place creating this system. The stability that these rules bring to the regime increases its legitimacy.”</i> • <i>“Representation of a variety of interests and groups increases citizens’ trust in the government, which helps the government maintain legitimacy.”</i> • <i>“A peaceful transfer of power between different parties sustains the legitimacy of a regime.”</i> • <i>“Transfers of power are more infrequent in one-party systems, which can allow for more policy continuity and experienced office holders, increasing legitimacy.”</i>
	Additional Notes: • To earn this point, the response must have a defensible claim or thesis (earned the point in Row A). • The explanation of the relationship between one piece of evidence and the claim or thesis is sufficient to earn this point.	

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
Row D Responds to Alternate Perspectives	0 points Does not meet the criteria for one point.	1 point Responds to an opposing or alternate perspective using refutation, concession, or rebuttal.
(0–1 points)	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes	
	Responses that do not earn this point: - Restate the opposite of the claim or thesis. - May identify or describe an alternate perspective but do not refute, concede, or rebut that perspective.	Responses that earn this point: Must describe an alternate perspective AND refute, concede, or rebut that perspective.
	Examples of responses that do not earn the point: Restate the opposite of the claim or thesis <i>“A dominant party system is not better at maintaining political legitimacy.”</i> Describe an alternate perspective but do not refute, concede, or rebut that perspective <i>“The other side would argue that a multiparty system is better at maintaining political legitimacy than a dominant party system, but it is not.”</i>	Examples of acceptable responses to an alternate perspective may include: <i>“Some say that a one-party state is better at maintaining legitimacy because policies are consistent over time, but this argument is wrong because one-party states lack electoral competition, which decreases representation and undermines political legitimacy.”</i> <i>“While people may argue a multiparty state is better at maintaining legitimacy because multiple viewpoints are represented, multiparty states may result in unstable coalitions that actually decrease support for the regime.”</i> <i>“Many political scientists believe that a dominant party state is better at maintaining legitimacy because there is more stability, but election rules reducing competition could cause governments to lose legitimacy over time.”</i>
	Additional Notes - To earn this point, the response must have a defensible claim or thesis (earned the point in Row A). - Responses that demonstrate an incorrect understanding of the alternate perspective do not earn this point.	

- **Important:** Completely fill in the circle that corresponds to the question you are answering on this page.

Question 1

Question 2

Question 3

Question 4



Begin your response to each question at the top of a new page. Do not skip lines.

When compared to a one-party or a dominant party system, a multiparty system ~~ats~~ allows for the representation of a broader spectrum of people which helps sustain political legitimacy. Nigeria is a very diverse country with many ethnicities, religions, and languages spoken. The level of diversity often leads to tensions between groups. Nigeria has a multiparty system, with parties often aligning with certain demographics. Nigeria has an election policy that states that in order for a candidate to win for president, they must win at least 25% of the vote in ²/₃ of the states. This ensures that a good amount of the Nigerian population is represented when elections take place. If Nigeria were to have a one-party or a party dominant system, much of the Nigerian population may feel like they weren't being represented in their government, which would hurt the government's legitimacy.

Mexico was one a dominant party system, but is now a multiparty system. When Mexico was a dominant party system, there were many accusations of the elections being corrupt, and the dominant party overpowered smaller parties. Now in Mexico's legislature, there are multiple parties with a significant presence, more accurately representing the Mexican population. Claims of corruption have also significantly decreased.

Multiparty systems also encourage voter turnout. If a citizen of a country feels as though they aren't being properly represented by the governing party, they can vote in the next election for a different party. This is not something that can happen in a one-party system or in a party dominant system since one party will always

Page 5

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Important: Completely fill in the circle that corresponds to the question you are answering on this page.

Question 1

Question 2

Question 3

Question 4



Begin your response to each question at the top of a new page. Do not skip lines.

be in power.

Although some may argue that one-party or dominant party systems have an easier transfer of power between leaders since power is being exchanged to the same party, it is simply not true.

There is almost always a peaceful transition of power between leaders of differing parties in multiparty systems. We can see this in Mexico with the peaceful and successful transfer of power between the PRI, PAN, and Movena parties.

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Question 1

Question 2

Question 3

Question 4



Begin your response to each question at the top of a new page. Do not skip lines.

A multiparty system sustains political legitimacy better than a one-party or a dominant party by providing representation and ~~a peaceful transfer of power~~ free and fair elections!

Mexico is a great example of political representation. Mexico has certain quotas in political elections ~~which~~ that ensure there is a female candidate on the ballot. This increases the political representation of women in Mexico. In the UK, small/smaller parties are able to provide representation for minorities due to their plurality system. This system allows small/smaller parties to win local ~~and at~~ elections, even national elections, and it allows them to gain seats in Parliament or local districts. This representation allows

~~The UK is a great exam~~ for the citizens of these nations to feel like their vote matters and it ~~increases the pol~~ sustains the political legitimacy of the nation by giving everyone a voice.

In both the UK and Mexico, free and fair elections are used to elect candidates. Unlike in a one-party or dominant party state citizens have many political parties to choose from on the ballot. Free and fair elections prevent corruption

Page 5

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Question 1

Question 2

Question 3

Question 4

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and election results from being violently disputed against. As a result, this sustains the nation's political legitimacy by preventing the corruption of their electoral system and by providing fair election results.

An alternate perspective could make the argument that one-party or dominant party systems have more political stability than multi-party systems due to their being only one party in power. As a rebuttal to this claim would be the uses of violent force in China (Uyghurs), Russia (Chechnya), and ~~Somalia~~ which saw the ^{and} use of military force to suppress the voices of minorities in elections. Another example is Hong Kong's protests against China which threatened the ^{recent} stability of the nation due to the threat of a revolution. In ~~contrast~~ short one-party or dominant party systems often maintain political stability through military force and violence while multiparty systems maintain it through representation and free and fair elections.

In conclusion, multiparty systems are able to sustain political legitimacy better than one party ~~systems~~ or dominant party systems by providing ~~representation~~ political representation for their citizens, and by providing free and fair elections.

Page 6

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Question 1

Question 2

Question 3

Question 4



Begin your response to each question at the top of a new page. Do not skip lines.

Multi-Party systems are better than ~~one-party~~ ^{one-party} systems at sustaining political legitimacy as they allow for a greater representation of the ideas of the people and promote political efficacy. In a multi-party system, practically anyone with any idea could attempt to run for office, and this tells people that their voices and ideas can be heard. A wide diversity of ideas in a society is inevitable, so ~~rather~~ having a party system that facilitates that rather than suppressing it is beneficial to not invalidating anyone's ideas. People with a weak sense of political efficacy are more likely to be unhappy with their government, and one of the foundational aspects of building a sense of efficacy in a group of people is giving them choice. It is simple human nature to want to be free, those without a sense of agency will ~~be~~ eventually do something to create it. History has shown that single party authoritarian regimes will come crumbling down if they lack strong militaristic power. Russia, for example, holds onto their legitimacy through militaristic strength, usage of propaganda, and the suppression of conflicting ideas. It's fragile at best though, as there is constant domestic conflict and civil unrest. Some might say single party systems are better as they simplify things and provide the people with the answers. But this simply doesn't work because people don't ~~like~~ like being told what to do.

Page 5

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Question 4 Argument Essay **Argument Essay**

Note: Student samples are quoted verbatim and may contain spelling and grammatical errors.

Overview

The intent of this question was to assess student understanding of political party systems and their impact on political legitimacy, while using one or more of the course concepts: stability, representation, or transfer of power. Students were expected to write an argumentative essay using each of the following skills: articulating a defensible claim/thesis; supporting the claim with two pieces of relevant evidence from a course country; using reasoning to explain why the evidence provided supported the thesis; and using refutation, concession, or rebuttal to respond to an alternative perspective. Specifically, students needed to demonstrate their understanding of multi-party, one-party, and dominant-party systems and their impact on political legitimacy, using the course concept(s) to establish the connection between the party systems and the concepts. Students needed to further demonstrate knowledge of the course countries by providing appropriate evidence from the countries that reflected the concept(s) they used in their thesis. Students also needed to be able to demonstrate their understanding of how the evidence they described was linked to the relationship between party systems and political legitimacy. Finally, students needed to demonstrate their understanding of alternate explanations by describing an alternate thesis, then justifying their concession, rebuttal, or refutation.

Sample: 4A

Score: 5

Claim/Thesis Score: 1

Evidence Score: 2

Reasoning Score: 1

Alternative Perspectives Score: 1

(A) The response earned 1 point for a thesis that establishes a clear line of reasoning using a course concept by stating, “When compared to a one-party or a dominant party system, a multiparty system allows for the representation of a broader spectrum of people which helps sustain political legitimacy.”

(B) The response earned 2 points for supporting the thesis with two pieces of evidence from one or more of the course countries related to the topic and course concepts. The response earned 1 point for stating, “Nigeria has a multiparty system ... This ensures that a good amount of the Nigerian population is represented when elections take place.” The response earned 1 point by noting that in Mexico, “there are multiple parties with a significant presence, more accurately representing the Mexican population.”

(C) The response earned 1 point for using reasoning to explain the relationship between the evidence provided and the thesis by stating, “If Nigeria were to have a one-party or party dominant system, much of the Nigerian population may feel like they weren’t being represented in their government, which would hurt the government’s legitimacy.”

Question 4 (continued)

(D) The response earned 1 point for describing an alternate perspective and refuting, conceding, or rebutting that perspective by stating, “Although some may argue that one-party or dominant party systems have an easier transfer of power between leaders since power is being exchanged to the same party, it is simply not true. There is almost always a peaceful transition of power between leaders of differing parties in multiparty systems.”

Sample: 4B

Score: 3

Claim/Thesis Score: 1

Evidence Score: 1

Reasoning Score: 1

Alternative Perspectives Score: 0

(A) The response earned 1 point for a thesis that establishes a clear line of reasoning using a course concept by stating, “A multiparty system sustains political legitimacy better than a one-party or a dominant party by providing representation.”

(B) This response earned 1 point for supporting the thesis with two pieces of evidence from one or more of the course countries related to the topic and course concepts. It earned 1 point by stating that the United Kingdom’s electoral system “allows small/smaller parties to win local elections,... and it allows them to gain seats in Parliament or local districts.” It did not earn a point for its discussion of gender quotas in Mexico, because it does not reference multi-party systems.

(C) The response earned 1 point for using reasoning to explain the relationship between the evidence provided and the claim or thesis by stating that in the United Kingdom, “This representation ... sustains the political legitimacy of the nation by giving everyone a voice.”

(D) The response did not earn a point for describing an alternate perspective and refuting, conceding, or rebutting that perspective. Although the response provided an alternative perspective and rebuttal, it did not earn a point because it addressed political stability instead of political legitimacy, as specified by the prompt.

Sample: 4C

Score: 1

Claim/Thesis Score: 1

Evidence Score: 0

Reasoning Score: 0

Alternative Perspectives Score: 0

(A) The response earned 1 point for a thesis that establishes a clear line of reasoning using a course concept by stating, “Multi-party systems are better than one-party systems at sustaining political legitimacy as they allow for a greater representation.”

Question 4 (continued)

(B) The response did not earn 2 points for supporting the thesis with two pieces of evidence from one or more of the course countries related to the topic and course concepts. The response did not earn a point for discussing Russian history and militaristic power because this is not relevant to one of the course concepts provided. The response did not earn a point for discussing multiparty systems, human nature, or history in general terms because this is not relevant or specific to a course country, and political efficacy is not a course concept in the prompt.

(C) The response did not earn 1 point for using reasoning to explain the relationship between the evidence and the thesis because there is no clear reasoning established.

(D) The response did not earn a point for describing an alternate perspective and refuting, conceding, or rebutting that perspective. It stated, “Some might say single party systems are better as they simplify things and provide people with the answers.” The response did not provide an alternate perspective to the thesis about sustaining legitimacy.